

## Local Musician Takes a Hike

By Sarah Henningsen



Paul Caccamo



Photos provided

**W**e all have that wild dream of simply packing our bags and taking off for a break from reality. Lamorinda resident Paul Caccamo is doing something along those lines.

The only catch is that he's been preparing throughout the past several years for the trip of a lifetime—a five month backpacking endeavor across the 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail, which runs from the Mexican border up to the state of Washington. Since departing at the end of April, Caccamo has hiked a significant number of miles and enjoyed the rewarding, though physically demanding, journey.

Paul Caccamo was at one time a student at Campolindo High School; now, a teacher and accompanist at his alma mater. A longtime citizen of Lamorinda, Caccamo is extremely involved in the music scene in the community both at school and through his plethora of piano gigs in the area. For the past nine years, he has worked at Saint Monica's Catholic Church in Moraga as a pianist for the weekend masses, and most recently, as a leader for the Church of Rock youth band and choir.

Considering his love of

music, Caccamo's decision to spend many weeks away from the piano and in total wilderness may seem implausible. Before embarking on his journey, he explained his reasoning in wanting to complete the Pacific Crest Trail: "For quite some time I've been feeling the desire to check out of our mechanized and digitalized existence. Cell phones. Car stereos. The neighbor's Harley at 7 AM on Monday. I could use a break from all this noise. That's one reason I'm going. Five months of quiet. I want to at least figure out what to do with the rest of my life, but I won't even think about it until August."

Hiking the entire Pacific Crest Trail is no small feat—it is estimated that only 300 people attempt the "thru-hike" each year, with only 75-100 finishing the entire trek. However, with extensive backpacking and camping experience under his belt, Caccamo is more than prepared for the undertaking. Since his first solo hike in 2001, he has completed various hikes in the Bay Area, the Sierra Nevada, and even Wyoming. Fortunately, he will be joined by two of his closest friends for this particular journey. As Caccamo

commented, "We have already traveled many miles together and with any luck it will soon be many more."

The Pacific Crest Trail itself features many scenic locations of interest for hikers and nature aficionados, passing through famous national parks like Sequoia, Kings Canyon, Yosemite, Mount Lassen, Crater Lake, and the North Cascades. Caccamo mapped out his journey: "The Pacific Crest Trail will be my main route, but there are several side routes, particularly in Oregon, which I will take. The important thing is to walk the whole way, not to be on the exact official trail the whole time. Outside of the parks we'll visit multiple wilderness areas. We'll be in the desert and in the high alpine regions and everything in between."

Until October 1st, when he expects to complete the hike and return to Lamorinda, Caccamo will be sorely missed by his numerous friends and students. He has agreed to drop the Lamorinda Weekly a quick note every now and then, as he will have internet access roughly twice a month. Look forward to reading updates about this incredible journey.



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